

RANCHO SAN DIEGUITO; A GENERAL CHRONOLOGY

Prepared by Roxana Phillips
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- 1769 Spanish expedition arrives in San Diego. This year represents the beginning of Spanish rule of California, with the arrival of Father Serra and a contingent of soldiers and Indians from Lower (Baja) California, where the Spanish had already gained a foothold in the New World. Their arrival serves as a marker for establishment of the first Franciscan mission and of the first presidio in California.
- 1785 Juan Maria Osuna is born in Loreto, which is located in Lower California, to a soldier who was part of the 1769 expedition to Alta (Upper) California. Within three years, the Osuna family returned to Upper California and Juan Maria Osuna grew up to be a soldier like his father. Both served as soldiers known as leather-jacket soldiers, or *Soldados de Cueros*.
- 1806 Juan Maria Osuna, then a soldier at the presidio, married Juliana Josefa Lopez at Mission San Diego de Alcalá.
- 1822 Upper California becomes a territory of Mexico.
- 1831 Individuals are beginning to settle on land, previously used for cattle grazing by the mission, under provisional grants of land issued by the Mexican government. A man named Lebrado Silva receives a provisional grant of land within the area later known as Rancho San Dieguito, and reportedly builds an adobe on the land.
- 1835 The pueblo of San Diego is established in the area, now known as Old Town, at the foot of the hill where the San Diego Presidio was located. Juan Maria Osuna became the first *Alcalde*, or mayor, of the pueblo.
- 1836-1846
Osuna receives a provisional grant of land from the Mexican government that includes the southern portion of what was to become Rancho San Dieguito. This land was formally granted to Osuna in 1840 or 1841, and additional land was granted in 1845. In total, the land consisted of 8,824 acres that was identified as Rancho San Dieguito.
- 1834-1846
In addition to serving as the first mayor of the Pueblo of San Diego, Juan Osuna also served three terms as

Justice of the Peace. Following secularization of the missions in 1833, he served as the civilian administrator, the *mayordomo*, of the San Diego mission property.

During this time period, Osuna divided his time between living in Old Town and at the rancho, where he cultivated the land for crops, raised cattle and in later years also raised sheep.

- 1846 The Osuna family supported the Mexican forces in the Mexican War. His oldest son, Leandro, fought under Andres Pico during the Battle of San Pasqual.
- 1846 California became a part of the United States.
- 1851 Juan Maria Osuna died. In 1851 an act of Congress required rancho owners to prove ownership of the land. Juliana Osuna and her children submit a claim to the Land Commission for possession of Rancho San Dieguito.
- 1871 Rancho San Dieguito is patented to the Osuna family twenty years after the claim was submitted and eight months before the death of Juliana Osuna. Members of the family started disposing of portions of the rancho prior to issuance of the patent.
- 1875 As a result of a land dispute, Rancho San Dieguito was partitioned under the District Court. The bulk of the land was awarded to J. S. Mannasse and Marcus Schiller (5,268 acres), and A. H. Smith (2,864 acres). Members of the Osuna family retained approximately 435 acres.
- 1877-1906
A. H. Smith acquired all of the rancho except for 116 acres owned by Francisca Marron de Osuna, widow of Leandro Osuna. In 1904, Smith sold his land to George Gilbert and James Connell. The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company purchased all but 116 acres of the rancho. The land owned by Francisca Osuna was sold several times between 1910 and 1917, when it was sold to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.
- 1924 The land formerly owned by Francisca Osuna was purchased by A. H. Barlow. The adobe building present at the time of purchase was rehabilitated by Lilian Rice, a noted San Diego architect. Miss Rice made few changes to the original floorplan, retaining the original door and window openings. The shingled roof was replaced with a tile roof and the original porch was replaced with a smaller entry roof. A fireplace appears to have been added at that time.

NOTES REGARDING THE OSUNA ADOBE LOCATED ON VIA DE SANTA FE

All indications are that this Adobe was begun in the 1830s by Lebrado Silva. A few years later, it was acquired by Juan Maria Osuna. His family owned it until 1910.

It was purchased by A. H. Barlow in 1924. Barlow arranged for Lilian Rice to rehabilitate the structure.

1925

At the time when Lilian Rice began rehabilitation of the adobe it had been vacant for an undetermined number of years. The land on which the adobe stood had been sold by members of the Osuna family in 1910, and the adobe was possibly vacated in that year. Most of the walls and the roof of the building were relatively intact in 1924.

Lilian Rice retained the general configuration of the building. The existing walls were used and missing walls were constructed with adobe blocks made for that purpose. Major changes to the building included:

- removal of a shed portal along one side of the building and replacement by a smaller entry roof;
- replacement of a shingled roof with a tile covering;
- addition of shutters on the windows; and,
- addition of an interior fireplace.

1930s

Several changes were made to the building in the 1930s that consisted of:

- addition to and enclosure of an open patio and the addition of a small corner fireplace;
- construction of a new entryway; and,
- construction and enclosure of a kitchen. Sometime after the work by Lilian Rice, this area had previously been screened for use as a kitchen.

Today

The adobe remains much the same as it did following the 1930s additions.

A Few Words About Small Adobe Buildings

by Roxanna Phillips

CONSTRUCTION

The buildings represent a simplicity of design focused on available materials and daily needs. They were constructed of adobe blocks made from a mixture of clay soil, sand and straw. The materials were mixed to the proper proportions and consistency, poured into molds for forming and after removal from the molds, were left in the sun to dry and harden. Commonly, one or two rooms of one story height were built and additional rooms were added later if required. The rooms were generally small and square with dirt or wood floors, and in the early years, were covered with thatch. Interior and exterior walls were plastered with a lime plaster made from sea shells to protect the adobe blocks.

USE OF THE BUILDING

Rooms within the building served a variety of functions, including cooking, eating, sitting, storing gear and sleeping. Cooking commonly took place outdoors when weather permitted. Entertaining was also a function of the structure and the family as hospitality was an important responsibility based on social custom. One can imagine the activities that took place in the small dwelling that housed or accommodated an extended family that could have included a wife, husband, children, aunts, uncles and grandparents, or travelers or other visitors.

RANCHO ACTIVITIES

During the Mexican period of California's history, which took place roughly around the second quarter of the 19th Century, the primary activity was raising cattle for the production of hides and tallow. Cowboys, referred to at that time as "vaqueros", were an intricate part of the rancho. Did they also live, sleep and eat at the rancho?